

THE COPY OF A LETTER

SENT

By Mr. D. T. to Mr. John Vicars (Mr. Prynns second) in Answer
to his Letter sent by him to Mr. John Goodwin.

A righteous man hateth lying, Prov. 13. 5.

Righteousnesse keepeth him that is upright in the way, Prov. 13. 6.

Onely by pride cometh contention, but with the well advised is wisdom, Prov. 13. 10.

*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest another, for wherein thou
judgest another, thou condemnest thy selfe, for thou that judgest doest the same things, Rom. 2. 1.*

Sir,

VVHether it was my good or hard happe to meet with your Letter directed and sent to Mr. John Goodwin, I cannot easily determine: For though all manner of knowledge, either of persons or things, bee in some kind or other beneficiall; it being an undoubted *Maxime*, that *Verum & Bonum convertuntur*: yet some knowledge may be so circumstantiated, that it may prove more burdensome and offensive to the party knowing, then commodious. I confesse from the reading of your Lines I have gained thus much, to say I know you: but this gaine hath occasioned such a considerable losse in the things of my joy, that I doe even wish for my former ignorance, and could bee well contented, to have met with no other description of your frame and temper, then what the promise of your countenance, and the report of your friends have made of you: Indeed it cannot but deduct somewhat from the comfort of a reasonable man, to see one, whom (one would think) gray haire should have taught the language of sobernesse, shooting with his tongue at rovers, and speaking sharpe and devouring words against persons and things, which hee knows not. Sorry I am, that Mr. Vicars should break the fair face of his reputation upon this stone, against which this befotted world is dashing it selfe in peeces from day to day. I have some hope that though your zeale to Mr. Prynns glory, did cast you into such an extasie of passion, that you scarce knew what you writ; yet by this time you have pretty well recover'd your selfe againe: and lest the sense of your miscarriage should too much oppresse you, I give you to know that you are falne into soft and tender hands, and have discovered your nakednesse to such onely, who rather pity, then deride it. For my part, I love not to disport my selfe at the weaknesse of any man, or to turne his folly into laughter; for what were this, but to reflect dishonour upon the same nature, wherein hee partakes with my selfe. Rather, I could mourne over the vanities of your pen, and weep to see you so farre intoxicated, as to call the most injurious dealing one shall lightly meet with, by the name of candor and ingenuity. The truth is, you have so foully betrayed your paper with bold and untrue assertions, imputations, exprobrations, and such like excrements, that I thought even for modesty sake to have drawn over them the veile of silence, and to have contested with that spirit that breathes in them no further, then by speaking to it in a secret wish, the Lord rebuke thee. But I considered with my selfe, that perhaps you might communicate in the nature of such persons who (as Solomon saith, Prov. 26. 5.) are apt (being unanswered) to be wise in their own conceits: and if I shall hereby demolish or at least weaken this conceit of yours, I presume I shall do you herein a very charitable and Christian peece of service. Think not I am become your enemy, because I tell you the truth: you have injur'd mee no otherwise then by trespassing upon your own credit, and by making thereby a sad breach in that holy profession, wherein you stand engaged with my selfe. Whatever your intentions were, I conceive you have done me no more wrong in clapping the title of an *Independent Profelyte* upon my back, then Pilate did to Christ in affixing this Superscription over his head, *This is the King of the Jews*. I think this name to be full as honourable, as that of a poore and unworthy Presbyterian, wherewith you have pleased to baptize your selfe: and conceive that herein only you have followed your owne, or rather the Apostles counsell, in honour to preferre others before your selfe. But had you been minded to suppress your name, your very Dialect had been enough to betray you: Me thinkes you write just like such a one as you say you are. Did I not hope for better things from the hands of more worthy Presbyterians, your unworthy dealing had set me off ten degrees further from your way, then I now stand: But I will not take the advantage of your, or any mans misdeemeanor, though more grosse and absurd then yours, to render Presbytery odious to the world: To cloath any opinion or practice with the garments of mens personall distempers, thereby to fall upon them and beat them with the more applause, is a method which I as much abhorre, as the Gentleman you admire, delights in: and if this property in him were one of those beauty-spots, which ravish't you into a passionate adoration of him, you need not feare, that ever I should become your corivall: And yet I love and honour Mr. Prynns for what ever you can finde lovely and

neath the line of a man, is to make him and my selfe obnoxious to the wrath of God, and the scorn of man. I acknowledge that for a time he ran well, but who hindred him? questionlesse *He* who is ever and anon hindring the Saints in the race of holinesse. The Prince of darknesse owed him a fall for his sharpe contending with his prime agents, and now hee hath pay'd his debt; but if Mr. *Prynn* will beerul'd by the advice of his best friends, hee may rise again to his greater glory, and notwithstanding his fall, triumph over the envy and malice of the devill. Concerning Mr. *John Goodwin*, (over whom you shake the rod of your reproofe, as if hee were one of your Schollers) I could speak as high and excellent *Encomiums*, as you have spoken of your *precious Gentleman*; I could compare him even with Mr. *Prynn* himselfe: but such a comparison as this, would bee to mee most odious. I could tell you what hee hath done, what hee hath writ, how deeply hee hath suffered from unreasonable men; yea, I could give you such a lively and bright description of him, as would dazzle your eyes to look upon, and make you blush for shame to have grap'd with such a person as hee is, upon such rude and unmannerly termes as you have done. For you, who are but a *Teacher of boyes*, so haughtily to correct a *great Master in Israel*, is such an absurdity, as cannot but rend a more patient soule then mine, into disdain and griefe. 'Tis a wonder to me, that, whereas at the beginning of your Letter, you confesse your selfe to bee but a *poore and unworthy Presbyterian*, you should so far forget your selfe, before you come halfe way, as to take upon you, like the Dr. of the Chaire; and to censure the best of men and wayes with as much confidence, as if your pen had dropt the Votes of a Generall Assembly with its inke. Had a poore and unworthy Independent done the like, you would have cast his boldnesse into a Basiliske, and us'd it to batter down the way of his profession, and to lay the glory of it even with the ground. But I well perceive, though you have escap'd the *snare of guists and parts* (in which you feare Mr. *Goodwin* is taken) yet you are false into the pit, not of divine, but naturall simplicity; and have verifed the old Proverb, A rash mans boult is soon shot. As for that Book of Mr. *Goodwins*, call'd *Innocency and Truth triumphing together*, though you are pleased to triumph over both, and to cast it out as an Arch rebell to reason and morallity, yet (I must tell you) it hath found joyfull and bountifull entertainment in the judgements of sober and intelligent men: But certainly, it was the unhappinesse of this Treatise to fall into your hands, when you stood upon the Mount of Mr. *Prynns* honour, and when the vision of his transfiguration wrought so strongly in you, that you did not wot, what you spake, no, nor what you did neither, for you laid about you with such regardlesse fury that you broke the head of your friend *Priscian*, [*The words in the written Coppy of your Letter, are these, and thus spell'd, qui in alterum paratus est dicere, ipsum vicio careat oportet, as may appeare from the original in Mr. Goodwins custody. But it seems the Corrector being the better Grammarian transform'd them into good Latine in the Printed Copy.*] of whose safety men of your profession, should bee most tender. I thought to have argued the case with you, whether your exceptions against this Treatise and its Authour, will hold in the Court of Reason and equity: but perhaps you are not so well skill'd in the rules of this Court; and I am loath to take the advantage of you. I shall only propound a few Querees, peradventure the struglings of your thoughts to give them satisfaction, may dissolve the enchantment that is now upon you. What persons did ever most *Learnedly declare Mr. Goodwin to bee justly censured for Socinianisme*? When, or in what *publique* place did they make this Declaration? How call you that Brother of his, who will *justifie* against him the charge of *holding a most damnable opinion without justifying faith*? I suppose you must strain, not so much your memory as your invention, in shaping your answer: You had done well to remember, that though *Fooles* (as *Solomon* speaks) *believe every thing*; yet *wise men* will question such assertions as these: Alas (*Sir*) the best course you can run to game credit with the prudent, is to cut your allegations and your proofes, jult of one and the same length: To cloath large and broad sayings with curtaild Arguments, reflects as much shame upon such sayings, and him that speaks them, as *Hannun* did upon the servants of *David*, in cutting off their Garments to their buttocks. You cannot but know, how that many grave, sober, godly, and learned men have false into that way you call *Independency*. Now, your onely method, to have brought over these to your party, and to have fill'd their mouths with the cry of a confederacy against this way, had been this; not barely to have affirm'd it to bee a *novell and disturbant way* (as you have done) but to have poys'd the lightnesse of your affirmation, with the weight and substance of a demonstration. I assure you (*Sir*) (what ever you may thinke) I approve of this way no further then I see the footsteps of those *sweet sisters, Truth and Peace* Printed in it: I have narrowly view'd it, and I can finde no drops of blood, no strewings of the liberties, estates, names, comforts of the Saints scattered in it, and yet some Travellers affirme, they have seen such things as these in that way, which the ignorance of thousands lusts after. But to conclude, I beseech you (*Sir*) bee more watchfull over the extravagancies of your tongue and pen for the future: since you are (in part) acquainted with their infirmities, let it be your wisdom to seek their cure. I reverence you for your age, piety, and some services you have done to the Publique; and I should rejoyce to see such an ancient stander in the garden of God as you are, carrying your hoary head with honour to the grave: which that you may doe, as I have (you see) in part indeavoured, so I shall further prosecute with my prayers to him, who is able to keepe you to the end: in whom (though I am unknown to you) yet with all sincerity I professe my selfe,

February 3.

1644.

Sir,